

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 01885 120149Z
ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EINV EAID EINO BG OVIP
SUBJECT: SAIFUR RAHMAN'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES

REF: STATE 063646

1. I HAD A BRIEF TALK WITH PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER SAIFUR RAHMAN ON APRIL 7 ABOUT HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE U.S. RAHMAN WAS PLEASED WITH THE RECEPTION HE RECEIVED AND WITH HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH U.S. OFFICIALS AND PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN. IN THE CASE OF THE LATTER, HE FELT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN BANGLADESH ON THE PART OF RESPONSIBLE U.S. BUSINESS. HE MENTIONED WHAT WAS SAW AS FOUR SPECIFIC RESULTS FROM THE VISIT:

(A) HENDERSON LTD. OF RICHARDSON, TEXAS, HAD GIVEN HIM A "FIRM PROPOSAL" REGARDING AN \$85 MILLION INVESTMENT IN BANGLADESH FOR A LIQUID AMMONIA PLANT.

(B) HE HAD HELD FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR GENERAL MOTORS OFFICIALS IN NEW YORK AND WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT GM WOULD GO AHEAD WITH ITS PROPOSED INVESTMENT IN CHITTAGONG TO INCREASE FACILITIES FOR ASSEMBLYING BEDFORD TRUCKS.

(C) HE HAD HAD DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH AN UNNAMED U.S. RUBBER COMPANY ABOUT CONSTRUCTION OF A PLANT IN BANGLADESH TO PRODUCE 100,000 TRUCK TIRES ANNUALLY.

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THE IDEA WOULD BE EVENTUALLY TO EXPAND THE CAPACITY TO 200,000 TIRES, USING THE ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION FOR EXPORT.

(D) RAHMAN GREATLY APPRECIATED HIS GOOD DISCUSSION WITH UNDERSECRETARY OF COMMERCE HERMAN AND HOPED, AS A RESULT OF THIS TALK, THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WOULD BE ABLE TO BRING ABOUT A REDUCTION OR

ELIMINATION OF THE DUTY CHARGED FOR CERTAIN HANDICRAFT
ITEMS FROM BANGLADEHS.

2. RAHMAN SAID HE ALSO HAD EXTREMELY USEFUL DISCUSSIONS
WITH SENATORS STONE AND INOUE. HE FOUND BOTH INTERESTED
IN BANGLADESH AND WILLING TO CONTINUE SUBSTANTIAL U.S.
ASSISTANCE. SENATOR INOUE SAID (JOKINGLY?) THAT THE
CONGRESS WOULD INCREASE WHEATEVER AID THE ADMINISTRATION
REQUESTED FOR BANGLADESH. HE HAD ALSO EXPLORED THE
POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC AID WITH IBRD VICE
PRESIDENT STERN AND HAD BEEN TOLD THAT TH BANK WOULD
BE WILLING TO GIVE "THREE TIMES" ITS PRESENT LEVEL OF
AID IF SUITABLE POJECTS WERE AVAILABLE. THE PROBLEM,
STERN HAD EMPHASIDED, WAS NOT ASHORTAGE OF AVAILABLE
FUNDS, BUT A SHORTAGE OF BDG PRIJECTS.

3. SAIFUR RAHMAN ALSO RAISED WITH ME THE BDG REQUEST
FOR ADDITIONAL FOODGRAINS AND EDIBLE OILS. (WE HAD
BEEN OVER THIS AT LEAST ONCE BEFORE.) I TOLD HIM WE
HAD THIS UNDER URGENT CONSIDERATION BUT THAT THE
INFORMATION GIVEN US BY THE BDG TO DATE DID NOT SUPPORT
THE LEVEL OF COMMODITIES REQUESTED. I WENT OVER WITH
HIM AGAIN. AS I HAD PREVIOUSLY, THE FACT THAT IT WOULD
NOT BE IN THE INTERESTS OF EITHER COUNTRY TO SEND IN
MORE COMMODITIES THAN WERE ACTUALLY REQUIRED AND COULD
BE PRODUCTIVELY UTILIZED. I ALSO REITERATED THE
IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THE BDG ACHIEVING SELF-SUFFICIENCY
IN FOODGRAIN PRODUCTION AND OUR STRONG DESIRE THAT OUR
PL-480 PROGRAM NOT IN ANY WAY DETRACT FROM MOVEMENT
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TOWARD THIS GOAL. RAHMAN LISTENED BUT PROBABLY
REMAINS UNCONVINCED.
MASTERS

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Message Attributes

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